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SUBJECT: BAHAMAS REQUESTS PARTICIPATION IN WIREC 2008

REF: REF STATE 80344

¶1. Based on the Government of the Government of the Bahamas' strong interest in the area of renewable energy, Post requests it be added as an invitee to the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC 2008) to be held in March 2008.

¶2. Although the Bahamas is not a net exporter of energy resources, it does have a strong interest in renewable energy. As an archipelagic nation, providing clean and affordable energy to residents scattered on over a dozen inhabited islands has always presented a challenge. Extensive tourist facilities that host the nation's four million visitors a year also place a heavy strain on current energy resources. With one of the highest per capita GNP levels in the region, The Bahamas has the resources and appears to have the political will to make improvements in this sector. Participation in WIREC could provide a valuable forum for ministers to bring the issue of renewable energy to the public's attention. Ministers have increasingly sought to promote conservation and energy efficiency, and have expressed interest in exploring renewable energy including wind, solar and undersea current energy.

¶3. When WIREC was announce in June 2007, Embassy contacted key ministers about possible participation in the conference, who registered their interest in participating if possible. If invited, the Minister of State for Public Utilities Phenton Neymour, Minister of Public Works and Transport Earl Deveaux, Minister for Housing Ken Russell and possibly a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could attend.

¶4. Please notify Post if invitations will be forthcoming for Bahamian representation.
SIEGEL